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Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 05750 191109Z
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 EUR-08 INR-05 CIAE-00
NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 SP-02 L-01 MCE-00
ACDA-10 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-03 /064 W
----------098342 191424Z /50
R 190505Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9337
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 5750

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SO, SA, US
SUBJECT: ARMS FOR SOMALIA

REF: (A) STATE 180916 (B) STATE 185967

1. DCM MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ABDUL RAHMAN AL MANSOURI ON AUG 17, AND GAVE HIM LIST OF ARMS REQUESTED BY SOMALIA. DCM POINTED OUT THAT REQUESTED ARMS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR TWELVE STANDARD SOVIET DIVISIONS AND THAT THE TOTAL COST WOULD EXCEED HALF A BILLION DOLLARS. THIS AMOUNT SEEMED EXCESSIVE AND THE USG IS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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PROCEEDING TO MAKE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY OF SOMALI NEEDS. USG WOULD APPRECIATE SAG'S VIEWS ON WHAT GAPS NOW EXIST IN THE SOMALIA DEFENSE STRUCTURE AND WHAT GAPS MIGHT RAPIDLY OCCUR IF THE SOVIETS CUT OFF THEIR SUPPLIES.

2. DCM THEN SAID THAT WE WOULD APPRECIATE HOLDING

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ONGOING CONSULTATIONS ON SOMALIA WITH THE SAG WITH
THE COMMON OBJECTIVE OF ENCOURAGING LESS SOMALIA
RELIANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION. THE USG WOULD KEEP
THE SAG INFORMED OF OUR ARMS SUPPLY PLANS AND WOULD
APPRECIATE FULL DETAILS OF SAUDI ARABIA'S PAST OR
PROJECTED DELIVERIES.

3. DCM ALSO ASKED FOR DETAILS OF SAUDI FINANCIAL
ARRANGEMENTS. DOES SAUDI FINANCING INVOLVE TRANSFER
OF FUNDS TO SOMALI CONTROL, OR WILL THE SOMALIS MAKE
PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE SUPPLIER? IF THE FORMER,
IS THE MONEY CLEARLY EARMARKED FOR ARMS? ARE AMOUNTS
DESIGNATED FOR ARMS PURCHASES EARMARKED FOR SPECIFIC
NATIONAL SUPPLIERS? WILL THE SOMALIS STILL BE
REQUIRED TO CLEAR ARMS PURCHASES WITH THE SAG FIRST?

4. DCM THEN NOTED THAT USG HAD SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO
OBSERVE ANY CLEAR SIGNS THAT THE SOMALIS WERE REDUCING
THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS, AND ASKED IF THE
SAG HAD OBSERVED ANY SUCH SIGNS. DCM ALSO ASKED IF
THE SAG INTENDED TO SEND A MILITARY MISSION TO SOMALIA.

5. MANSOURI REPLIED THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM
A LENGTHY VACATION IN EUROPE AND WAS NOT CURRENTLY
INFORMED ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS. HE EXPRESSED THE
VIEW, HOWEVER, THAT SAG WAS PROBABLY LESS CONCERNED
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OVER THE FUTURE DISPOSITION OF THE OGADEN THAN IT WAS
INTRIGUED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF EMBARRASSING THE SOVIET
UNION THROUGH THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN TWO
OF ITS BEST KNOWN CLIENTS IN THE AREA. IN MANSOURI'S
VIEW, THE MERE FACT THAT THE FIGHTING WAS NOW TAKING
PLACE WAS MOST GRATIFYING TO THE SAG. HE SAID THAT
THE SAUDIS HAD HOPES THAT THIS SITUATION WOULD BE
SUFFICIENTLY EMBARRASSING TO THE SOVIET UNION THAT
THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE AREA WOULD BE REDUCED.

6. DCM REPLIED THAT THE USG WAS CONCERNED OVER THE
APPARENT ATTEMPT BY THE SOMALIS TO ALTER THE BORDER
WITH ETHOPIA. THE USG SUPPORTED THE OAS PRINCIPLE
THAT THE BORDERS OF AFRICA SHOULD REMAIN AS THEY
WERE AT THE TIME OF INDEPENDENCE. THERE ARE ANY
NUMBER OF TRIBES AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN AFRICA WHO
WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGES IN THE EXISTING BORDERS,
AND IF THIS PROCESS WERE TO BEGIN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT
COULD BECOME AN AREA OF CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL
INSTABILITY FOR DECADES TO COME. THE OUTBREAK
OF FIGHTING IN THE OGADEN IS THEREFORE A FACTOR
WHICH THE USG MUST CONSIDER IN IMPLEMENTING ITS

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SOMALI ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAM.

8. MANSOURI DID NOT DISAGREE WITH THESE REMARKS BUT REPEATED THAT THE SAG'S MAJOR INTEREST AT THE PRESENT TIME IS TO REDUCE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE REGION.

9. MANSOURI PROMISED TO CONVEY THE ANSWERS TO THE OTHER QUESTIONS AFTER HE HAD HAD TIME TO CATCH UP WITH CURRENT SAG THINKING ON SOMALIA. HE DID SAY THAT HE WAS REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT SAG WOULD NOT SEND A MILITARY MISSION TO SOMALIA.
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